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UNCLAS KATHMANDU 001619

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR SA/INS
LONDON FOR POL - RIEDEL

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: PROMINENT MAOIST SURRENDERS TO HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

1. (U) On August 19 Mukti Pradhan, a member of the Maoist Joint Revolutionary Council on the Government of Nepal's most wanted list, surrendered to members of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). In a press conference at NHRC, Pradhan said he had decided to turn himself in because he wants to live peacefully "within the Constitution." He also cited disenchantment with the Maoists' current tactics, including attacks on village-level infrastructure, which he noted could turn Nepal into "a Somalia." The Government had offered a reward of nearly USD 45,000 for information leading to the arrest of Pradhan, a lawyer.

2. (SBU) According to human rights activist Subodh Pyakurel, after the press conference Pradhan left for his Kathmandu home, accompanied by members of the NHRC, where he remains under police protection. He has since been able to leave his home on a few occasions--always accompanied by friends--to buy food and newspapers. Pyakurel described Pradhan as "terrified" of possible repercussions from both the Maoists and the security forces.

3. (SBU) Comment: The reported arrests of other members of the Joint Revolutionary Council, such as Rekha Sharma, Bishnu Pukar Shrestha, and Krishna Sen (and the apparent death in custody of the latter) may have persuaded Pradhan that surrender--and a well-attended press conference announcing that surrender--offer the safest course of action. It remains unclear if the police protection offered to Pradhan amounts to house arrest, or whether the police may decide to detain him elsewhere for questioning.

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